(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether Government has also brainstorming on the reasons for not achieving projected returns and why has the actual performance of these retail outlets fallen short of projects;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the present position thereof?

THE MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) New retail outlets are set up by the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) based on the feasibility study of the location. Locations found feasible and economically viable are rostered in the State-wise Marketing Plans for setting up retail outlets. OMCs are planning to commission 3215 new Petrol Pumps in the country during the year 2007-08 subject to availability of land, obtaining the NOC/statutory approvals, etc. OMCs are upgrading their existing retail network by introducing retail automation for all retail outlets selling more than 200 KL per month.

(e) to (g) After dismantling of Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM) and entry of new players in the market, it is a natural phenomenon that the retail outlets of the OMCs would lose certain market share. OMCs have formulated strategies in various segments of the market with focus on customer delight. In this regard, OMCs have taken several retail initiatives in the last 3-4 years, such as branding of retail outlets, introduction of branded fuels, loyalty based card programmes, thrust on non fuel business, new visual retail identity etc. OMCs have informed that the overall performance of their retail outlets has been found to be satisfactory.

Request to OPEC for raising crude oil output

826. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has asked Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to raise their crude oil output and squeeze skyrocketing prices;

(b) if so, the details of the request and whether there has been any reaction from OPEC;

(c) whether it is also a fact that oil starved countries including India would intensify their campaign to find crude oil substitutes on a war footing; and

(d) if so, the details of the efforts being made by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, while addressing the OPEC international Seminar held in September, 2006 at Vienna, Austria, Union Minister of P&NG had raised the soaring oil price issue. The Minister pointed out that "Oil security is not just oil supply security. Even with the secure oil supply source, a developing country may not be in a position to procure adequate oil unless price is affordable. So the price stability has become an important constituent of oil security. Given the vital role of energy prices in the economic and social well being of the common man, it is imperative to provide oil at affordable prices and this is becoming increasingly difficult given the present oil price scenario."

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Various measures are being taken on a continuous basis to find crude oil substitute in the country, which are as follows:

i. Carving out more and more areas of natural gas for exploration for offer under various rounds of New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP).

ii. Quicker development of discovered gas reserves for enabling commencement of production.

iii. Use of stimulation techniques for increasing production from existing fields of natural gas.

iv. Application of Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR)/Improved Oil Recovery (IOR) techniques for increasing recovery factor from existing fields.

v. Exploration and production of Coal Bed Methane Gas.

vi. Exploration of sites of underground coal gasification.

vii. Participating in gas hydrates programmes carried out by various countries.

viii. Acquisition of exploration acreages and oil & gas producing properties overseas to bring in equity oil and gas.

ix. Encouraging Oil PSUs to aggressively pursue equity and oil gas opportunities overseas and supporting them at diplomatic level.

x. Substitution of oil through use of non-conventional source of energy such as bio-diesel, ethanol etc.

xi. Setting up of Hydrogen Corpus Fund for supporting Research and Development in various aspects of Hydrogen which could substitute part of natural gas as transport fuel in future.

Loss incurred by public sector refineries

827. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the delays taking place to limit the losses of the State run Oil Refineries which supply cheap fuel at a time of rising crude oil prices, pose grave risk to public finances and to the growing domestic economy;

(b) if so, whether any measure to expeditiously address the situation is being contemplated;

(c) if so, the details along with the losses incurred during last six months, month and refinery-wise and the impact of the measures on the prevailing inflation; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) The Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are maintaining accounts on an integrated basis. When considered on integrated basis, OMCs are incurring under-recoveries on domestic sale of petrol, diesel, kerosene and domestic LPG due to increase in the prices of crude oil and petroleum products in the international market. The gross estimated under-recoveries of the OMCs on sale of sensitive petroleum products *i.e.* petrol, diesel, PDS kerosene and domestic LPG during the period April to September, 2007 is as under:

(Rs. in crores)

Under-Recovery*	April—Sept., 2007 (Provisional)
Petrol	2638
Diesel	9919
PDS Kerosene	8206
Domestic LPG	5608
TOTAL:	26363

*Gross under-recoveries without considering oil bonds, upstream assistance and refinery discounts.